

US FOREST SERVICE NORTHWEST MONTANA BACKCOUNTRY AVALANCHE ADVISORY



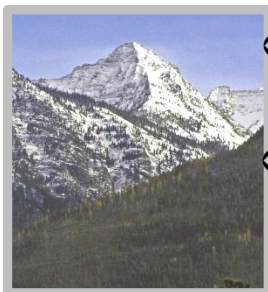
FOR THE GLACIER PARK AND FLATHEAD & KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST AREAS

Avalanche advisory does not apply to developed ski areas

Issue Date: 8 AM, Tuesday, February 7, 2012
Valid Until: Midnight, Tuesday, February 7, 2012
Next Update: Friday, February 10, 2012
Issued by: Tony Willits

This advisory is a product of the US Forest Service, US Dept. of Agriculture. Along with other snow and avalanche information, it is originally posted at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/flathead>. An audio summary is available via telephone at 406-257-8402

All Mountain Ranges



7,500 ft. elevation



5,000 ft.



Avalanche Danger Summary	
2 - Moderate	5,000 to 7,500 ft. elevation on steep, open terrain
1 - Low	below 5,000

AVALANCHE – INSTABILITY DESCRIPTION

All Mountain Ranges - 5,000 to 7,500 ft. elevation

Danger Level	2 - Moderate
Confidence	FAIR
Travel Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heightened avalanche conditions on steep, open slopes and gullies Evaluate snow and terrain carefully
Likelihood of Avalanches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural avalanche unlikely Human triggered avalanches possible
Avalanche Size & Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small avalanches in specific areas or Larger avalanches in isolated areas

AVALANCHE – INSTABILITY DESCRIPTION

All Mountain Ranges - below 5,000 ft. elevation

Danger Level	1 - LOW
Confidence	Good
Travel Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally safe avalanche conditions exist Watch for unstable snow on isolated terrain features
Likelihood of Avalanches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both natural and human triggered avalanche unlikely
Avalanche Size & Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very small avalanches in widespread areas or Small avalanche in isolated areas

Because of the general nature of this advisory message, each backcountry party will always need to make their own time and site specific avalanche hazard evaluations. This advisory best describes conditions at the time of its issuance. As time passes avalanche and snow conditions may change, sometimes quite rapidly. Elevation and geographic distinctions used are approximate and transition zones between hazards exist.

Recent Mountain Weather

Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friday –0300 Tuesday --- A ridge of high pressure has been established over the region since Friday.
Precipitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No gains in snow water equivalent from Friday to Sunday night. There was a trace of new snow in the eastern portion of our region on Monday associated with colder air slipping in from the east side.
Temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valley inversions with clear skies above 5500 feet elevation, have kept mountain temperatures cool with mid teens as lows although single digits were realized overnight.
Wind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> East winds entered the region with a cold front drifting in from the east along The Divide. Winds were moderate at upper ridge top elevations.

Field Observation Locations

Monday, 2-7-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheer Ridge in West Cabinets 15 miles SW of Troy Jewell Basin NE of Bigfork Patrol Ridge west of Challenge Cabin off of the Skyland Road
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Observer Report Locations

Non received	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
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Avalanches Observed

No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No recent natural avalanches were observed. Good visibility
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Instability Concern / Avalanche Problem	Level of Concern	Most★★★ Less★★ Least ★		
New Storm or Near Surface Snow	★★★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surface hoar development is widespread across the region and was noted in the Southern Whitefish Divide on Saturday, and Noisy/Jewell Basin's, West Cabinets and Patrol Ridge on Monday. This is occurring on all aspects but more developed on the more shaded and protected aspects. Crystal sizes were growing to 1.5 inches in Jewell Basin on Monday. The current surface hoar development will be a weak interface upon the arrival of new snow. 		
Wind Loading	★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> East winds were transporting snow at ridge top elevations and loading west aspects. 		
Recent or Persistent Buried Weak Layer	★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Near surface faceting could be developing with the colder temperatures in the surface 10 to 30 cms providing a potential weak interface in the event of new storm snow. . 		
Spring Wet Snow or Melt-Freeze		Not applicable		
Rain-on-Snow		Not applicable		
Loose Snow		None observed		
Other Concerns		.		

Weather Forecast[Current NWS Backcountry Forecast](#)

Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drier air moving over the region today... with a trough of low pressure moving into the region on Wednesday.
Precipitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potentially light snow fall is predicted on Wednesday but accumulations will be limited.
Temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mid teens for lows and mid twenties for highs. .
Wind	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Light winds will transition to the SE today and be from the S by tonight. Wednesday thru Thursday should see light winds from the west.

Avalanche Outlook

Trend	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The avalanche danger is expected to remain at current levels through Thursday.
Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forecast models are predicting a breakdown of the ridge beginning Thursday night but the timing is uncertain and could be delayed into the weekend. Moisture in the form of snow could stream over the ridge or lingering ridge and bring some snow to the region's upper terrain potentially this weekend. A wetter pattern may enter the region by the first of next week. The concern will be new snow overlying the current surface hoar layers.
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carry and know how to use avalanche safety equipment• Watch for a possible rapid change in weather conditions beyond forecast amounts• Check out the site specific snow stability before jumping in or on